## INFORMATION TO USERS

This was produced from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure you of complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark it is an indication that the film inspector noticed either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, or duplicate copy. Unless we meant to delete copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed, you will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed the photographer has followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. For any illustrations that cannot be reproduced satisfactorily by xerography, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and tipped into your xerographic copy. Requests can be made to our Dissertations Customer Services Department.

5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases we have filmed the best available copy.

University Microfilms International

300 N. ZEEB ROAD, ANN ARBOR, MI 48106
18 BEDFORD ROW, LONDON WC1R 4EJ, ENGLAND

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

7928619

TAYLOR, PAUL NEWMAN
THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF CHRISTOPH SCHREMPF (1860-1944).

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, PH.D., 1979

University Microfilms International 300 N. ZEEB ROAD, ANN ARBOR, MI 48106

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

# THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF CHRISTOPH SCHREMPF

(1860-1944)

by

Paul Newman Taylor

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Religion
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

July, 1979

Thesis supervisor: Professor James C. Spalding

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

Paul Newman Taylor

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Religion at the July, 1979 graduation.

Thesis committee: James Leo Garrett
Thesis supervisor

James T. McCue
Member

J B Burge
Member

Jerry W. Bill
Member

James Waddington
Member

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

I. INTRODUCTION. . . . . 1

II. HISTORICAL SITUATION - APOSTOLIKUMSTREIT. . . . . 18

Schrempf's Dismissal and the Creedal Struggle. . . 18
Two Interpretations of Schrempf's Role . . . . . 26
A Reinterpretation of Schrempf's Role. . . . . 31

III. EARLY THEOLOGY: THE PROBLEM OF GOD . . . . . 45

From the Creed To the Presence and Absoluteness of God . . . . . 45
Preservation of the Means of Revelation. . . . . 56
A Christological Foundation. . . . . 64
Beyond the Means: The Reality of God - A Task . . . . . 74

IV. LATER THEOLOGY: THE REALITY OF GOD . . . . . 85

The Reality of God: Das schlechthin Unberechenbare . . . . . 85
The Relation to Das schlechthin Unberechenbare: The Individual and the End of Religion . . . . . 91
Jesus: A Paradigm of Response . . . . . 95
The Absolutely Incalculable as Contrary Will . . . 100

V. CRITICAL ASSESSMENT . . . . . 107

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . 128

PREVIEW



Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

# I

# INTRODUCTION

Christoph Schrempf is little known outside of the confines of his native Germany and what is known of him, especially in this country, is invariably tied to his translations of the works of Soren Kierkegaard, translations which have themselves been the center of various sorts of controversy. On the other hand, in Germany where Schrempf is known, it is nonetheless true that his legacy is not a happy one, for the remembrance of him is to this day tied to his youthful misadventure with die evangelische Landeskirche Württembergs. In sum, both at home and abroad, Schrempf was and is remembered as a controversial figure.

And yet curiously, it seems that perhaps Schrempf was not a sufficient irritant, for apart from references to such controversies which form the standard interpretation of Schrempf, there has been no work which elucidated his own thought and hence no investigation of the foundation upon which Schrempf is remembered as such a controversial figure. In a word, his own thought has been passed over and his influence seems to have passed with his death.[1]

---

[1]Even Otto Engel, a member of the Schrempfean inner circle and editor of the Gesammelte Werke as well as of a smaller three volume selection from the collected works, Religion ohne Religion, attests to this view. Compare his "Christoph Schrempf zum Gedächtnis," Stuttgarter Zeitung, 1954.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The primary purpose of this thesis is to provide a critical examination of Scrempf's thought which underlies what has now become the standard interpretation of his work; and in doing so to provide corrections to past interpretations of both historical and theological import and to advance alternative interpretations. To accomplish this our study will be divided into three parts.

The first part will reexamine the role Schrempf played in the creedal struggle and the subsequent interpretations made of his participation. This section will be primarily historical in nature and we will show that previous interpretations of Schrempf at this juncture miss the foundation of his protest to the creed. Rather than a protest in line with the historical criticism of scripture and doctrine as found in Harnack, we will see that Schrempf proposes a rejection of any external authority in religion and does so in the light of his understanding of the later writings of Kierkegaard.

The second part of the study will provide a comparative analysis of Schrempf's religious writings which have been neglected because of the scholarly consensus which assimilated Schrempf's role in the creedal struggle with the liberal position of Harnack. This will be accomplished in two stages. In the first stage, spanning the years 1893-1914, we will examine Schrempf's rapid transition from the creedal struggle to the question of the reality of God. Here we will see that Schrempf's commitment to a view of religious existence without external authority leads him to envision the revelatory character of Jesus as inherently ambiguous and self-transcending. And it

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

will be shown that this commitment forces him by degrees to seek an understanding and confirmation of God as a reality which underlies not only Christianity but religion as well. In the second stage of Schrempf's development, 1919-1940, the divine as an independent reality will appear as central to his thought. God as the "absolutely incalculable" will emerge as a form of reality which brings the religious individual to self-actualization. For Schrempf, this will signal the end of religion as a corporate entity and at the same time will provide a non-ambiguous and normative role for Jesus as one who displays a fitting response to the "absolutely incalculable."

The last part of this study will provide a critical assessment of Schrempf's religious thought through an analysis of the structure of its development. Positively we will see that Schrempf's conception of the divine places alienation as the fundamental characterization of human existence. Further it will be shown that such a characterization allows him to transcend the estrangement of the individual from the other when coupled with his non-ambiguous picture of Jesus. Negatively, we will be critical of the supposed independence of the divine, maintaining that such independence needs to be accounted for in terms of a methodology, which he does not provide, for passing from the religious tradition to an examination of reality and then back again.

In these introductory pages, however, it may be prudent to provide some account of Schrempf's work and influence as a whole

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

with the intent to familiarize the reader with the content of the subject to appear in the thesis, to point out the breadth of Schrempf's work which will not appear in the thesis, and finally to proffer some suggestions as to why Schrempf was without greater effect.

To begin with the familiar is to recall Walter Lowrie's statement of a generation ago that Schrempf's translations of Kierkegaard are "the only German edition of S.K.'s works which can lay any claim to be 'complete.'"[2] The first of these reached the stage of publication in 1909 with Diederich's press in Jena and in co-editorship and translation with Gottsched. Gottsched, credited with a longstanding passion for Kierkegaard, may have been introduced to the Dane through his Tübingen colleague Beck and in 1879 he left his teaching position to aid in the editing of S.K.'s papers. Even earlier, pastor Bärthold was publishing translations and interpretations of S.K.'s writings. It is plausible that Schrempf learned of Kierkegaard from Beck, Gottsched, and Bärthold during his training for the ministry at Tübingen Stift. In any case, by 1891 and before his dismissal from his pastoral position, Schrempf was already developing an independent position with respect to the significance of Kierkegaard, for in that very year the publication of his "Sören Kierkegaards Stellung zu Bibel und Dogma" focused upon the later writings of S.K. and provided an interpretation which

---

[2]Walter Lowrie, Kierkegaard, Vol. I, Introduction (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), p. 5.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

stood in contrast to that of Bärthold who viewed S.K. as supportive of the church.[3] From this, however, it would be inaccurate to surmise that Schrempf's concern with S.K.'s agitative writings was one opportunistically adapted to Schrempf's struggle with the state church. Previously Schrempf had already published translations of both S.K.'s Concept of Dread and Philosophical Fragments[4] and as early as 1886 had published a review of Kierkegaard literature: "Sören Kirekegaard und sein neuester Beurteiler in der Theologischen Literaturzeitung."

The significance of Kierkegaard was the first but not the only controversy into which Schrempf was drawn by his translations and interpretations. Yet I know of no work which has made a critical examination of Schrempf's interpretations of Kierkegaard, interpretations which he characteristically attached to his translations in the form of introductions and epilogues. Instead, the English audience is directed toward the need for such a work by the provocatively ambiguous indictment provided by Walter Lowrie.

> S.K. is quite capable of convincing you that you are not a Christian, and perhaps making it clear to you that you do not wish to become such. . . .the most striking instance of such a conversion was that of Christoph Schrempf, a Lutheran pastor in Germany, who ascribes to the influence of S.K. the extreme theological liberalism which subjected him to exclusion from the ministry of the Lutheran Church, upon which he and his family were dependent for their daily bread, and drove

---

[3] Infra., p. 32, n. 43.

[4] Published in 1890 by Verlag Friedrick Richter, Leipzig.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> him eventually to a position of bitter hostility. Incongruously he has spent his life translating S.K. and combating Christianity. His is the only German edition of S.K.'s works which can lay any claim to be 'complete'. And he has used this opportunity to revenge himself. Every book that he edits contains a postscript of his own in which he strives to show how perverse and foolish S.K. was in sticking to Christianity, and how unkind it is of him not to furnish any proof of the existence of God. I wonder if any author has ever been so shabbily treated! For a long while I was enraged by Schrempf's Postscripts; but then in the end I began to realize that such a treatment is just what S.K. would have desired, as a protection against readers who might accept, without criticism or reflection, what they found written in his works, and above all as a protection against disciples who do not understand how dialectical everything is.[5]

I have no doubt that there is something substantial in Lowrie's well tempered confession of outrage and that it would be a story worth the telling. Yet as it stands Lowrie's judgment remains an indictment upon Schrempf's most visible legacy to religious thought and speaks more to a greatness of will on Lowrie's part in coming to a passionate and deep appreciation of Kierkegaard than it does to an invitation to investigate the substance of what even he believes Kierkegaard would desire as a protection to insure a proper understanding of his thought. To one who knows Schrempf's own writings on religion, however, there are sufficient indications to suggest that such a story might have a different ending or at least a significantly altered plot line. For example, Schrempf speaks about "losing his faith" before he became acquainted with Kierkegaard's writings and

---

[5]Lowrie, ibid., pp. 5-6.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

more significantly that this "loss" is an expression for regaining and deepening faith.[6] To claim that Schrempf is "bitterly hostile" to the church is certainly amiss, for early after his dismissal he dropped the issue of the struggle with the state church and was even credited by loyal church members for not parading the incident before the public audience when he had the opportunity to do so in the pages of his journal Die Wahrheit.[7] That Schrempf used his translations to seek revenge upon S.K. is at the least odd in the face of Schrempf's admitted "sympathetic antipathy" to Kierkegaard.[8] And if the form of revenge is to include a demand that the Dane provide a proof for the existence of God, then that needs to be harmonized with Schrempf's explicit rejection of all proofs for the existence of God.[9]

---

[6]Infra., p. 47.

[7]Otto Ritschl, "Die Wahrheit," Die Christliche Welt, 1894, pp. 1244-1249. Also, see Schrempf's "Abrechnung: 1. Mit der Kirche," Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 16, p. 29. Hereafter references to Gesammelte Werke will appear as GW.

[8]Schrempf frequently characterized his relation to Kierkegaard as one of "sympathetic antipathy." While our use of this term is descriptive, there is also an ironic sense to it in the context of Lowrie's judgment of Schrempf. It did not seem to occur to Lowrie, who recognizes Eric Przywara as having such a relationship to S.K., that Schrempf might also be described in this manner.

[9]Schrempf, "Von Gott," GW, Vol. 2, Noch im Banne der Kirche (Stuttgart: Fr. Frommans Verlag, H. Kurtz, 1930), pp. 98-103. Also, infra., pp. 73-74.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This story, then, has not been told. Nor will it appear in these pages. However, before one could give such an account of Schrempf's interpretation of Kierkegaard it would be necessary for a study such as this thesis provides to have occurred. One could not understand what Schrempf thought of Kierkegaard without first understanding what Schrempf thought. For the present readers of Kierkegaard will have to wait for an account of this desirable "protection" in reading S.K. and with the near completion of English translations of Kierkegaard's works, perhaps in vain. But then, the important matter with respect to S.K., as Schrempf himself remarked, is to read him, not his interpreters.

While the 1909 beginning of the Gottsched-Schrempf editions of S.K.'s works indeed bespeaks a growing interest among German readers with this Danish thinker, Kierkegaard's popularity did not reach its full stride within the development of theology until the advent of Karl Barth's The Epistle to the Romans a full decade later. Along with the upsurge of recognition of the theological significance of Kierkegaard came the Hirsch translations with the latter's accompanying call for a scientific treatment of the content of these works. Hirsch is a precursor to Lowrie's critical view of Schrempf's interpretation of Kierkegaard.[10] However, a different form of

---

[10]Emanuel Hirsch, "Schrempf, Christoph: Sören Kierkegaard, eine Biographie," Vol. I, Theologische Literaturzeitung, Nr. 23, 1927, pp. 548-549. And, Hirsch, ibid., Vol. II, Theologische Literaturzeitung, Nr. 11, 1929, pp. 260-261.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

criticism of Schrempf's works on Kierkegaard is also to be found here. Hirsch not only claimed that Schrempf's commentaries were ill fitted to the spirit of S.K.'s works, but further claimed that the translations were faulty in a technical sense.[11] The motivation for this latter charge is difficult to discern, if one does not rush to the obvious one of rival publications, but the inaccuracy of the charge is clear. In "Zur Psychologie der Kierkegaard-Renaissance" Hermann Diem lays to rest any claim of technical inaccuracy on the part of Schrempf by demonstrating that these translations are philologically in order.[12] More significantly, however, Diem goes even further in his support of the Schrempf translations in finding them to be precisely done in the spirit of S.K. such that they more than any other translation, present the S.K. writings as the engaging literature they are.[13]

The second controversial event in the life and legacy of Schrempf is his early conflict with the state church of Germany in the 1890's. The significance of this event is one that has followed Schrempf throughout his life, remembered in print even at the celebration of

---

[11]Hermann Diem in his "Zur Psychologie der Kierkegaard-Renaissance," Zwischen den Zeiten, 10 (1932), pp. 216-248 cites the following references to Hirsch on this matter: Z. f. syst. Th. I 227 and Hirsch's Kierkegaardstudien Heft I u. II. Bertelmann Gütersloh 1930.

[12]Diem, ibid., see especially his extended footnote on pages 237-239.

[13]Ibid., pp. 241-242, 245-247.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

his 75th birthday,[14] and lives beyond his death in the memory of present day Germans.[15] Since the thesis deals with this chapter of Schrempf's life and thought under the title of "Historical Situation - Apostolikumstreit," here I will briefly mention the force of this event in the understanding of Schrempf on his home ground.

The major sources of theological study which concern themselves with Schrempf in the history of religious thought and development of theology each portray Schrempf as a figure who is caught up in the struggle over the role of the creed in the state church and the two principal figures in shaping the corporate public memory of Schrempf (Hermelink and Nigg) conclude that Schrempf not only had his greatest moment in this event, but imply that he did not transcend the issue.[16] Consequently, in the ongoing study of the development of religion in the transition from the 19th to the 20th century Schrempf is all but passed over. In "Apostolikumstreit" it will be shown that these two interpretations of Schrempf's role in the creedal struggle are not correct and hence that the corporate

---

[14]For example see: Hermann Hesse, "Christoph Schrempf: Zu seinem 75. Geburtstag am 28. April 1935," Die Neue Rundschau, XLV Jahrgang, Band I, 1935, pp. 540-543, and F. Reichert, "Christoph Schrempf zum 75. Geburtstag," Die Hilfe, Nr. 8, pp. 190-192.

[15]During my studies in Tübingen, interviews with clergy and professors invariably began with their recollection of this 1891-1892 cause célèbre.

[16]Infra., pp. 26-31. Also note that neither Hermelink nor Nigg mention Schrempf in their works beyond this period.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

memory is a faulty one.[17] Furthermore, we will see that Schrempf very rapidly does transcend the creedal struggle for the more central issue of the reality of God.[18]

And yet nonetheless, we too will agree that in a sense Schrempf has indeed been left behind; yet we will do so with a difference. Schrempf's work on Kierkegaard, which has not been subjected to an extended investigation, and his early youthful conflict with the church have become the hallmarks of his remembered significance. Kierkegaard replaced his German translators and interpreters, as it should be; the state church of Germany turned to more pressing issues than the creedal struggle in its adjustment to the science of historical investigation, as it should have. Hence in both academic and ecclesiastical theology of Germany Schrempf has been passed over.

The reader needs to bear in mind the significance of this fact for the study at hand. The only explicit attempt to locate Schrempf within the more general streams of thought of the late 19th and early 20th centuries will be in relation to Harnack and the creedal struggle. It was only upon this occasion that Schrempf directly related himself to a theological tradition. And yet even here, as we will see, he proposed his view of Kierkegaard as an alternative to the liberal position represented by Harnack. After this point Schrempf proceeds as if a "new beginning must be made."

---

[17] Infra., pp. 26-44.

[18] Infra., pp. 45-56.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

His writings attest to this. Throughout, his work displays a remarkable reluctance on his part to mention the people he may have had in mind while developing his thought. It is conceivable that a reconstruction of Schrempf's work in relation to more general trends could be attempted. However, at best such a reconstruction would be extremely tentative, and is not appropriate to this study.

Yet with that the significance of Schrempf is neither accurately nor properly assessed, for his audience was neither the professional circle of theologians and philosophers nor the membership, either liberal or conservative, of an institutional state church. When he was heard it was elsewhere and by different people.

Schrempf's audience was in part the result of his wide range of interests, talents, and activities. In the years 1893-1897, as editor of the literary journal, Die Wahrheit, he not only reached a wider more well educated public than he found in his small parish, but also came in contact with world renowned literary figures. During this time he was in correspondence with Leo Tolstoy[19] and was apparently significant in the early development of Hermann Hesse,

---

[19]One such letter is contained in the archives of the K. Landes-Biblioth., Stuttgart, titled "Brief von Tolstoi an Pfarrer Christoph Schrempf," (Cod. hist. 8° 143). The contents of this August 26, 1895, letter from Tolstoy is an acknowledgement of his receipt of essays from and by Schrempf on his own works; a statement that Schrempf has correctly understood the essential ideas of his works; the judgment that Schrempf has not understood some important aspect, not mentioned, of his personality; and the anticipation of an opportunity to contribute something to Schrempf's journal.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

according to the latter's own account.[20] Throughout his life, Schrempf's interest in literature continued with increased depth and concentration culminating in the publication of numerous articles addressed to cultural issues of the times and major works on Schiller, Tolstoy, and Goethe,[21] the latter receiving public acclaim by Harald Höffding.[22] A further aspect of Schrempf's thought and production was philosophical and resulted in the publication of his studies on Socrates, Plato, and Lessing.[23]

The bulk of Schrempf's non-Kierkegaardian writings however lay in another direction and were directed to a different audience. These writings consisted of articles and speeches addressed to the public at large on the state and nature of religious existence. The

---

[20]Hermann Hesse, "Nachruf auf Christoph Schrempf," Neue Schweizer Rundschau, 1943-1944, pp. 717-726.

[21]For example, see Schrempf's: "Friedrich Schiller," Rede zur Schillerfeier am 20. Mai 1905, Amts= und Anzeigeblatt der Stadt Stuttgart, 1905, Nr. 116; "Schiller als religiöser Dichter," Rede zur Schillerfeier, am 7. Okt. 1921, GW, Vol. 8; "Leo Tolstoi," Rede im Stuttgarter Schauspielhaus, 29.1.1911, Württ. Staatsanzeiger, bes. Beilage, 1911. Nr. 2; "Tolstoi als Prophet," Die Wahrheit, V. 4. April-September, 1895, pp. 145-158; "Goethes Stellung zu Religion und Christentum," Aufsätze aus dem Goethehandbuch (J.B. Metzler, Stuttgart, 3. Bände) 1916/18; "Goethes Lebenanschauung in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung," Teil 1: "Der junge Goethe" 1904/05, Teil 2: "Lehrjahre im Weimar" 1907, GW, Vol. 6.

[22]Harald Höffding, "Christoph Schrempf," Die Tat, 13 Jahrgang, 1921/22, p. 361.

[23]For example, see Schrempf's: "Sokrates - Seine Persönlichkeit und sein Glaube," 1927; "Rezension über Platon von R. Ritter," Die Christliche Welt, Nr. 30, 1910; Lessing als Philosoph (Frommanns Klassiker der Philosophie, Band 19), 1906.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

substance of these writings forms the basis for the following chapters and represents, I believe, the central locus for the statement and development of religious thought which is uniquely and characteristically that of Schrempf.

To assess the significance and role of Schrempf is in part to ascertain the composition of this public to whom he addressed the larger part of his energy over the span of nearly 50 years. At first his public appeared to be undifferentiated as evidenced in his publication of the proceedings against him in the Apostolikumstreit and a direct appeal to theology students who would enter into parish work.[24] Subsequently the focus appeared to shift again with the appearance of Die Wahrheit to a literary and perhaps non-religiously orientated audience. Yet out of this mixed beginning a more unified group appeared to be the center of Schrempf's concern which he felt he could identify with his 1896 "Die religiöse Aufgabe der Gegenwart."[25] In this work Schrempf identifies religious existence with the recognition of life as a puzzle and the awareness of this puzzlement as the initial step in the emergence of a self or personality and spirit.[26] In contrast to this stands the sense of religious existence as a moment in the cultural life of a believer, where religion is placed alongside of a family role, citizenship, and profession.[27] Schrempf was addressing himself to those who recognized life as a puzzle.

---

[24] Infra., pp. 19-20. [25] Schrempf, GW, Vol. 2, pp. 419-438.

[26] Ibid., pp. 419-420. [27] Ibid., pp. 420-423.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Such a group would perhaps include that disparate and largely anonymous part of the public who were no longer able to find their orientation to life within the established church and yet yearned for a sense of religious life and existence which could sustain them in their alienation from traditional forms of Christianity.[28]

In part, the success of Schrempf's venture to address this group was enhanced by the indirect and ultimately ambiguous support given to him by the liberal Protestant theologians centered in the group formed around Martin Rade and Die Christliche Welt.[29] For they frequently labeled Schrempf as a pioneer in the vanguard of those who could reach people lost to their own Christianity and theology, with of course the hope that these outsiders would eventually return to something they judged to be more substantial.[30] Whatever the dynamics of group formation might be, an audience did develop around Schrempf, "particularly in Stuttgart."[31]

---

[28]For this description I am especially indebted to Prof. Dr. Hansmartin Decker-Hauff of the History Department of Tübingen Universität. Personal interviews, July 8 and 15, 1975. Also see, "Durch Christentum hindurch zu Gott," GW, Vol. 13, p. 258.

[29]In 1886 Martin Rade, along with W. Bornemann, P. Drews, and Fr. Loofs, began this journal as a public forum for the expression of liberal views in theology. Rade was strongly influenced by Harnack and as a champion of freedom of conscience in religion, Rade entered the Apostolikumstreit at several points, including the incidents involving Jatho and Traub. Rade continued to edit Die Christliche Welt until 1931. Infra., p.19, n. 3, n. 6; p.20, n. 9.

[30]Infra., pp. 64-74.

[31]A popular work of the same title, Besonderes in Stuttgart by C. Hohrath (Clara Römel) depicts the role of Schrempf and the group he addressed.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

As a professor at the Technische-Hochschule in Stuttgart Schrempf was recognized as particularly gifted in reaching the student generation with his lectures on religion and philosophy; his lectures filled the largest hall in the school,[32] which was a fortunate event for one who remained a privatdozent for the larger part of his professional career, and thus was paid according to the number of students he attracted to his lectures. Beyond the university setting it seems that Schrempf also had a great appeal and a large audience, for his weekly addresses on religion were such a source of interest and attraction that he was locally known as the religious Socrates of Stuttgart and he was an anonymous subject of a popular volume depicting life in the urban setting of Stuttgart.[33] Finally, there is evidence that within these two larger circles of influence, there grew up a Schrempfean inner circle; a smaller group who sought him out and regularly met with him to discuss matters of religion and culture. It was this group which encouraged and finally brought to fruition the publication of the 16 volumes of Schrempf's collected works.[34] With an audience such as this, then, it is not difficult to surmise that his influence would attain its greatest effect in the moment

---

[32]Paul Sakmann, "Etwas über Christoph Schrempf," Süddeutsche Monatshefte, February, 1911, pp. 229-230.

[33]C. Hohrath, Besonderes in Stuttgart.

[34]Ferdinand Stäbler, "Gesammelte Werke von Christoph Schrempf," Die Christliche Welt, Nr. 23, 1929, p. 1151, and Prof. Dr. Decker-Hauff, personal conversation, compare n. 28, p. 15.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and wane with his passing. To such an audience, an educated public alienated from the major sources of religious vitality, he must have become accepted as their unofficial pastor and theologian; as one who shared their predicament and nonetheless held fast amid the uncertainties that characterize human existence to the belief that even this form of life, if not especially this form, was substantially a religious one.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

# II

# HISTORICAL SITUATION - APOSTOLIKUMSTREIT

## Schrempf's Dismissal and the Creedal Struggle

On the fifth of July, 1891, in the Leuzendorf Parish in Württemberg, Pastor Christoph Schrempf, having undergone a moral struggle over the sermon text Matthew 6:19-34, resolved never to employ a confession which he could not also confess to personally and that afternoon performed a baptism without using the mandatory Apostles' Creed.[1] This omission went unnoticed until Schrempf informed his ecclesiastical superior what he had done and later announced his decision to his congregation from the pulpit. A protest was lodged from the congregation and during the ensuing twelve months of adjudication, in which Schrempf had only a single oral interview with his superiors, he was successively replaced in the performance of baptisms, suspended from active participation in his congregation while concurrently having to pay his replacement out of his own salary, and finally on the third of June, 1892, removed from his office entirely, without notice or pension.[2] In response to this high-handed bureaucratic treatment, in which the sole explanation of

---

[1]Christoph Schrempf, "Akten zu meiner Entlassung aus dem Württembergischen Kirchendienst," GW, Vol. 1, p. 107.

[2]Ibid., p. 169.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the ecclesiastical decision was that Schrempf violated paragraph 47 of the constitution requiring pastors to use the creed with baptisms,[3] he took the offensive in a public form. In order that the laity could judge for themselves who was at fault, he had the correspondence between church officials and himself published in July of 1892, including his early plea (August 6, 1891) for a morally inoffensive position within the service of the church, and his later charge (January 11, 1892) that the church was then in a morally intolerable situation.[4] This publication was followed by an open question to the church asking if he was still to be considered a member of the church at all.[5] This direct attack received no official notice.[6]

---

[3]Karl Köhler pointed out a number of irregularities in the proceedings against Schrempf, including that he was not informed of the grounds for the judgment against him. "Die Amtsentsetzung des Pfarrers Schrempf vom kirchrechtlichen Standpunkt aus betrachtet," in Die Christliche Welt, 1892/93, p. 870. Also cf. n. 9, infra., p. 20.

[4]Schrempf, ibid., pp. 131 and 160 respectively.

[5]Ibid., "Eine Frage an die evangelische Landeskirche Württembergs," p. 225.

[6]There were two anonymous responses by "C.B. in . . . .und Chr. R. in Tüb." to which Schrempf responded in an open letter to each. "Zur Pfarrersfrage: Zwei offene Briefe an die Herrn C.B. in . . . . und Chr. R. in Tüb. Hochwürden, nebst einer Beilage," in GW, Vol. 1, pp. 229-285. First published by Fr. Frommanns Verlag, E. Hauff, Stuttgart, 1893. "Chr. R. in Tüb." was Christian Römer and "C.B. in . . . ." was Karl Bürk, a prelate of the church in Stuttgart. Some twenty years later Schrempf remarks that he was still without a response from the church and concluded, with apparent justification, that one could be a lay member of the church and a liberal, but not both in the service of the church and a liberal. "Uber die Frage des Austritts aus der Kirche," in Die Christliche Welt, Nr. 34, 1906, pp. 794-795. Shortly thereafter Schrempf withdrew his membership from the church.

PREVIEW

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.